

Westway and Imperium Expansion Projects

Draft Environmental Impact Statements



Recreation Fact Sheet

Recreation activities in and around Grays Harbor include boating, fishing, sports and bird-watching. There are several parks and natural areas for recreational opportunities in the area that are analyzed in the studies.

What impacts on recreation were analyzed?

People use recreation and natural areas in the Grays Harbor area and along the Puget Sound and Pacific (PS&P) rail line. Recreation is important to individuals and as part of the economy. The studies looked at state and city parks, boat launch areas, sports fields, and fishing areas and analyzed how they would be affected by noise and increased rail and vessel traffic. The analysis included the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, Chehalis River Surge Plain, Oyhut Wildlife Recreation Area and many other natural areas.



28th Street boat launch

How were the impacts analyzed?

The information about recreation came from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, local planning documents, public comments, talking with local planners, aerial photography, and site visits. The studies describe the current recreational areas and uses. They consider the proposed construction, facility operations, and transportation by trains and vessels in Grays Harbor and along the PS&P rail line. Then they identify potential impacts to recreational resources or access to them from the proposed projects. Finally, the studies include actions that can mitigate or offset the potential impacts.

How will the proposed projects affect recreational resources?

Construction and Operations

There will be no construction in the water. The studies found there would be no impacts to recreational resources on the water or on land. During construction, vehicles would drive from Port Industrial Road and would not likely block car access to the 28th Street boat launch, fishing pier, viewing tower, or nearby parks. Pile driving noise would temporarily increase noise levels near the project site during the maximum 22-month construction periods. These noises from construction could disturb surrounding recreational uses during this time but would not exceed noise standards.

While the docking capacity of the Terminal won't change under the proposed projects, vessels would be docked at Terminal 1 more frequently. Recreational users would continue to be able to navigate around the docked vessels.



Port of Grays Harbor Terminal 1

Noise levels from operation of the proposed projects would be similar to existing noise levels at the project sites. The studies found noise levels would be similar to existing levels, and would not affect nearby recreational areas. The appearance of the facility would be similar to how it appears currently, but with additional tanks. The new tanks are not likely to affect the view of recreational users.

Rail Traffic

Rail traffic along the PS&P rail line would increase from the proposed projects. Increased rail traffic would affect recreational uses near the PS&P rail line from the increased noise. The noise from a single passing train would not change but because of the increase in rail traffic, the average amount of noise each day would be greater. The studies found impacts from noise would be low to recreational users.

Rail and Vessel Trips per Year			
Transport	Without Projects	Proposed Project	
		Westway	Imperium
Rail	1,235	458	730
Vessel	436	238	400

Vessel Traffic

Vessel traffic would increase in Grays Harbor from the proposed projects. Increased vessel traffic could restrict access to recreational activities, including boating and fishing, while vessels are moving in the navigation channel. With the exception of the 28th Street boat launch, all other major boat launch areas are located far enough away from the navigation channel to not be affected by vessel traffic. Increased vessel traffic in the navigation channel and at Terminal 1 is not expected to impact recreational boaters because recreational boats are smaller and are not limited to the navigation channel.

Recreational fishing in the navigation channel could be disrupted when a tank vessel travels to or from the project sites. The greatest disturbance would occur primarily during salmon runs in September and early October. A typical tank vessel trip through the harbor takes about 2 hours. Under federal law, recreational boats must move for large commercial vessels that can only travel through the channel. Recreational fishing is seasonal, but even during the heavy season the impacts from increased vessel traffic to recreational fishers are expected to be low.

What can Westway and Imperium do to reduce impacts on recreation?

The studies identify the following mitigation measure to reduce impacts on recreational resources:

- Work with the Grays Harbor Safety Committee, including the U.S. Coast Guard and Port of Grays Harbor, to establish procedures to announce project-related vessel traffic arrivals and departures over a designated Very High Frequency (VHF) marine radio channel.

Where is more information available?

Within the Draft EISs, Section 3.10, *Recreation*, has detailed information on current conditions, analysis and findings related to the impacts of the proposed projects on recreational resources. The following sections of Chapter 3 also include detailed information and analyses relevant to recreation: Section 3.3 *Water*, Section 3.4 *Plants*, Section 3.5 *Animals*, Section 3.7 *Noise and Vibration*, Section 3.15 *Rail Traffic*, Section 3.17 *Vessel Traffic*. Chapter 4, *Environmental Health and Safety* also includes information about the risks of spills, fires, and explosions.

There are additional fact sheets discussing *Plants and Animals*, *Rail Traffic*, and *Vessel Traffic*. There is also a fact sheet with information on risks of crude oil spills, *Crude Oil Environmental Health and Safety*.

Visit www.ecy.wa.gov/GraysHarbor for more information on the proposed projects.